

THIRD DOUBLE FOR IMPROVED WYCOMBE

Hitchin Town 0, Wycombe Wanderers 2

WYCOMBE WANDERERS made up for Saturday's dismal defeat by Tooting when they efficiently dealt with Hitchin Town on Tuesday night at Top Field. It was the Blues' third double of the season, having beaten Town 4-0 in September.

Although Tuesday night's opponents were not of the same class as Tooting, Wanderers looked a far better outfit and seemed to have recaptured the enthusiasm for football that was missing on Saturday. They were far more eager to win possession and after a shaky start, never relaxed their grip on the points.

Hitchin were something of a disappointment. With newcomer Ray Hill and Tony Martin, their former British Universities man in midfield, they promised to be quite a barrier for Wycombe. But apart from the occasional swift moving attack, they were totally concerned with defence. Their passing of the ball in the second half was extremely poor.

There were several changes in Wycombe's line up, as expected. Kevin O'Brien came in for John Maskell who has broken his shoulder, while Bullock returned for out of form Gamblin. Keith Jameson replaced Alan Gane while Gerry Olson was preferred at centre back to Ian Rundle, who wore the number 12 shirt. Upfront, Tony Horseman made a welcome return for Mick Holfield.

VINTAGE GOAL

The changes paid off well. Olson and Delaney had their best game together as twin centre backs while Bullock and Jameson both impressed. Horseman layed on a vintage goal for Keith Searle and O'Brien pulled off several excellent saves.

Manager Brian Lee's faith in Johnny Hutchinson was justified with a much improved performance to Saturday. Mick Cooper at full back, revelled in the space on the flanks and his overlapping spelt trouble every time he was in possession.

It was Cooper, in fact, who opened proceedings with a swerving shot after four minutes. Hitchin were not long in replying, however, with winger Tony Hopes showing some neat touches. After 15 minutes Tony Martin's long throw was flicked on to top scoring Trevor Williams by Hill, but O'Brien covered the danger well at the expense of a corner. From the flag kick Martin's clever header was tipped over by the 'keeper.

Wycombe's answer to the early pressure was three successive corners and from the last, Hopes almost put Hutchinson's kick into his own net. But at this stage, Town looked a decidedly better outfit than on their visit to Loakes Park. Martin looked impressive in his new mid-field role while Kettleborough was strong at the back, well supported by Hughie Pratt.

Wanderers pressed again when Delaney's long throw was met by Searle, his header being

tipped away. Hutchinson got into the act three minutes later with a left foot drive but 'keeper Ian Richardson got down well.

Cooper's overlapping worked a chance for Pritchard after 43 minutes but during a scramble inside the Hitchin penalty area, Larry's two shots were cleared away. So, at half time, it looked as though Wycombe's inability to score would cost them dearly again, despite their territorial advantage.

Keith Jameson had other ideas. A strong run down the left after 49 minutes ended with Richardson saving well but two minutes later Jameson repeated the move and this time steered his shot wide of the 'keeper for his first goal for the club. The goal was made by Searle, who survived a hard tackle from Kettleborough, recovered, and sent over a precision pass.

With dangerousman Hill well contained by Olson, Hitchin's attack was severely blunted. Hopes never really got a look in as the game progressed while Harley and Williams were too concerned with Wycombe's attacking to present any threat to O'Brien.

Town's one class player was Tony Martin, whose intelligent running off the ball called for

close marking. Hutchinson, however, blotted out much of this danger with a tigerish display in midfield.

After 63 minutes Wanderers sealed the match with a classic Horseman-Searle move. Horseman controlled the ball well about 35 yards out and put in an overhead kick to Searle. Keith ran on and cracked the ball past Richardson.

The second score took much of the fight out of Hitchin, who deteriorated rapidly. With Wycombe winning a constant flow of the ball from Hutchinson and Pritchard their lead never looked in danger. Ian Rundle came on for the last few minutes for Cooper, who received some justly deserved applause from the Hertfordshire crowd.

S.E.

HITCHIN TOWN: I. Richardson, H. Pratt, J. Kettleborough, P. Robinson, B. Baigent, T. Williams, A. Harley, K. Bevis, R. Hill, A. Martin, A. Hopes. Subs: A. Garofall (not used).

WYCOMBE: K. O'Brien, D. Bullock, M. Cooper, (sub. I. Rundle, 85 mins), G. Olson, J. Delaney, K. Jameson, J. Hutchinson, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, A. Horseman, A. Amos.

Referee: A. H. Cooper (Wymondham).

Half-time 0-0.

Goalscorers: Wycombe — Jameson 51, Searle 63.